



Alcohol and Tobacco Control State of Louisiana

ATC Press Release

ATC CONTINUES TO CLEAN ITS OWN HOUSE

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Baton Rouge: Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control (ATC) Commissioner Troy Hebert recently uncovered major abuse of state issued cell phones by ATC enforcement agents through an internal audit he ordered of Agency cell phone records after being tipped off to the potential misuse from comments made by a senior agent. The audit revealed agents using hundreds of state paid cellular minutes for personal use while on duty and thousands of state paid cellular minutes when off duty.

In only one month, one agent racked up 3,000 minutes of personal use on his state issued phone with 1,400 of those minutes (over 23 hours) used while he was on the clock. Another high-ranking supervisor used over 2,600 state cellular minutes for his personal use with over 1,100 of those used while on the clock. During October, 22 ATC enforcement agents used a combined 12,328 state paid cellular minutes (205 hours) for their personal usage with over 5,400 minutes (90 hours) of those personal calls being made while the agents were on the clock.

"This type of blatant abuse of taxpayer dollars will not be tolerated. Rather than spending their time dealing with ATC issues, agents have decided to spend hours on personal phone calls and claiming pay from the state while doing so. Then, to make it even worse, they were using a phone paid for by the state to do it," said Hebert.

ATC has immediately halted this abuse and disciplinary actions are pending. The audit results will be submitted to the legislative auditor and inspector general for possible further investigation.

This abuse is just the latest finding in Hebert's continued effort to reform the deeply rooted culture of entitlement to assure Louisiana taxpayers that their hard-earned dollars are spent responsibly. Earlier this year, Hebert announced the resignation and demotion of several ATC agents after GPS devices on their state vehicles revealed some agents at home while on duty.

"Taxpayers deserve to get an honest day's work for an honest day's pay from state workers. As Commissioner, I will continue to root out abuses and strive to make ATC one of the most efficiently run agencies in the state," added Hebert.

In the last two years, positions have been reduced by 33 % throughout the Agency. This year, ATC is returning \$1.2 million dollars back to the state.

Below are some examples of minutes used for the month of October:

Agent	Personal Calls on Duty	Total Personal Calls
1	1402 minutes	2998 minutes
2	1167 minutes	2625 minutes
3	581 minutes	1024 minutes
4	432 minutes	1005 minutes
5	363 minutes	856 minutes
6	355 minutes	827 minutes
7	334 minutes	806 minutes
8	231 minutes	594 minutes

For more information, please contact:
Commissioner Troy Hebert
(225) 925-4041 or troy.hebert@la.gov
LA Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control